

## RECTOR'S PINT

For my piece this month, I mainly want to offer a brief tribute to my predecessor in these parishes, Rev. Victor Story.

Victor was the Rector here for fifteen years, more than enough time to get his feet under the table! I only met him a few times, when he returned here to assist with funerals, to give the eulogy or lead the prayers for people he had known well. I was always impressed by his attention to detail, and his warmth and love for those he was remembering.

Victor was a gentle man, and I know he was a man of prayer. As a qualified teacher, he maintained a love for schools, and I know that he was also well loved by them.

His funeral took place on 14<sup>th</sup> December at St. Mary's and it was well attended by many of his friends from the various parishes he had served in.

Victor had no family of his own. He was married for a few years in the 1990's, a time that brought him great joy. Tragically, his wife died, and I know that Victor carried the grief of that for the rest of his life.

Of course, there was a sadness at the funeral, but there was also much joy and thanksgiving, as we heard about his ministry here and elsewhere, including his life in Chipping Norton following his retirement, and what he meant to Matilda, the granddaughter of Vera who used to clean the rectory. Victor had appointed Matilda as his executor without her knowledge, but she did a magnificent job of pulling the funeral together. My thanks to Tim Suter and Kate Billimore and the choir for organising the music in such a short time – with Carol Services looming only three days later. The Nunc Dimittis at the end of the funeral was particularly beautiful. So many have commented that the whole service was 'just so Victor!'

It is hoped that Victor's ashes will be interred in the grave of his beloved wife in Evesham, where Victor served as curate between 1981 and 1985.

I would also like to send my best wishes for the New Year to all readers of the 'Pint'.

We have all experienced a bumpy ride for several years now, and we can only look out with increased sadness at the news we see unfolding in parts of our world. It adds some urgency to the beginning of the Lord's Prayer every time we use it: 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done...' In our own small way though, each of us has a responsibility to be an answer to that prayer.

As St Paul wrote in his letter to the Hebrews: (Chapter 11 Verse 1)

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen".

Through faith, we have hope. Peace and blessing to you all for 2024.

Simon